DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 411 027 JC 970 501

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TITLE	Briefing Paper regarding the Establishment of a Regional Technical and Industrial Skills Training Center.
PUB DATE	1997-06-12
NOTE	16p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Adult Vocational Education; Career Education; Cooperative Planning; *Education Work Relationship; Educational Needs; Feasibility Studies; Job Training; *Labor Force Development; Needs Assessment; *Partnerships in Education; Postsecondary Education; Regional Planning; *Vocational Training Centers

ABSTRACT

In spring 1997, Oregon's Regional Workforce Committee commissioned a study to investigate the feasibility of creating a technical and industrial skills training center in Region 12 of the state. Interviews were conducted with 40 individuals from area companies, social service agencies, and training organizations regarding the need for such a center and its functions. Results from the survey indicated that all respondents were interested in a partnership approach, which would entail participation by local organizations as training providers or training customers. The center should act as a regional broker of technical skills training courses, focusing on local training and skill development needs. The main constituencies to be served will include secondary students wanting to complete training while in high school, post-secondary students, the unemployed, and currently employed individuals wishing to enhance their career opportunities. The duration of training will depend upon participants' personal and career goals, ranging from 3 to 20 weeks of 40-hour-per-week instructional modules. Program offerings might include courses related to career progression skills, technical communication, fabrication technology, or office information management, while the center is expected to foster linkages with training agencies, social service agencies, and employers. Based on the interest expressed in the center, it is recommended that a meeting be held among school officials and potential partners to determine the center's economic potential, organization, location, programs, staffing, and funding sources. (JDI)

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ED 411 027

Briefing Paper Regarding the Establishment of a Regional Technical and Industrial Skills Training Center

by Roger Baden Powell
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for

the Region 12 Workforce Quality Committee

Mary Nixon, Executive Director

June 12, 1997

JC 970 501

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BRIEFING PAPER REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL SKILLS TRAINING CENTER

Executive Summary

Purpose of Paper — to present information on the potential demand and support for the establishment of a regional technical and industrial skills training center.

Background

- predictions of large numbers of jobs that will be created in Region 12
- recent industry additions and construction startups support the need
- by the year 2000, 80% of jobs will require technical skills, yet only half of workforce is adequately trained

Significance of the Need

- need for providing technical skills training in the Umatilla Morrow region is already becoming very significant
- technical skills training in this area is either currently unavailable or not available in a format that suits the needs of industry and trainees

Information Acquisition Process

- the concept paper on a technical and industrial skills training center
- mostly favorable responses obtained in early discussions of the concept
- the Regional Workforce Committee supported the concept and requested further investigative work
- interviews based on the concept paper were conducted with forty people
- survey responses brought additional ideas and led to rewriting the original concept paper into this briefing paper

Partnership Approach

- a strong community partnership will be required
- clear indication that most people are interested in a partnership effort
- coordination effort can be provided by the Region 12 Workforce Committee

Goals

- planning effort should be directed toward the establishment of a training resource that will act as a regional vendor and broker of technical training
- as much training effort as possible should be planned for existing facilities
- planning for the TSTC should specifically aim at accommodation of the needs of local enterprises and the skill development needs of various components of the local workforce.
- several goals have been verified by survey respondents

Curriculum Models and Learning Strategies

- will fulfill the technical skills training needs for
  - secondary students who wish to complete all or a large amount of their training while still enrolled in high school
  - post-high school students and a significant number of the unemployed workforce who wish to complete their occupational training in a relatively short time
  - currently employed members of the workforce who wish to enhance their career opportunities
- the measure of excellence for a training organization is the success of its graduates
- close coordination with local industry must be used to develop the topical aspects of the curriculum
- admission will be based on demonstration or accomplishment of threshold skills* and/or recommendations from employers, agencies, or previous schools and the completion of an initial learning skills development module
- learning/coaching methods must be taken from the most effective strategies available and would include learning-coaching, skillful thinking, computer-assisted instruction, reflective teaching, and competency-based, project-oriented classes
- quality assurance for the training effort must be based on regular feedback from employers and graduates to assure its continuing excellence
- a complete program will involve a set of 40-hour modules (courses) in several skill and personal development areas
- modules will be organized in career-oriented groups
- a complete learning prescription for an individual might involve modules from several career areas
- duration of training would depend on the participant's personal and career goals and industry requirements for the chosen occupation
- the TSTC will also offer advanced courses on an as-needed, custom-developed basis to fit the needs for members of the current workforce
- work ethics would be emphasized throughout the curriculum

Possible Program Offerings

- possibilities for technical training offerings are almost limitless and could be offered with great flexibility
- once developed, training units will remain on the shelf for use by others
- several examples of possible training programs are listed

Partnerships and Linkages

- three categories of linkages among partners and the proposed center
  - training agencies — allow seamless progression for training from

basic skills through acquisition of the first career job
    - social service agencies — provide counseling and funding assistance for participants and political support for the center
    - employers — provide the ideas for curriculum and feedback for quality assurance and hire the graduates from the training programs
- specific linkages can exist with the Oregon Advanced Technology Consortium, the JOBS program, Adult and Family Services, Employment Department, Blue Mountain Community College, the Educational School District, the regional school districts, and local employers.

Analysis

The information presented in this paper about the need for, goals of, and proposed functions for a technical and industrial skills training center in this region has been reviewed and supported by more than forty people. Support for the total concept is demonstrated by the favorable and detailed responses to this survey of potential partners and local employers. It describes various innovative teaching/learning strategies, curricula, and scheduling flexibilities which together would provide the needed training strategies. The description of how the training center works are based on research about successful modern learning methods.

However, this paper does not address specific planning questions about when, where, which, how much, etc. — that is, planning questions that must be addressed before a project proposal can be made. The next step toward the implementation of this center is the development of a project plan. A decision to pursue this project plan is the next step for the Regional Workforce Committee.

To Take the Next Step

The next step toward the implementation of this center is the development of a project plan. A decision to pursue this project plan by the Regional Workforce Committee Current Workforce Subcommittee would allow for access to miscellaneous support including office supplies and office space with a copy machine, a telephone, and a FAX machine and sponsorship the meeting described below.

To Start the Planning Process

The planning effort should start immediately. An initial meeting should be held involving business and industry partners, superintendents of school districts within a 50-mile radius, community college administrative and instructional staff, ESD staff, and members of interested agencies . The group would begin to examine the challenges and opportunities, specifically to look for funding channels. Questions to address in the plan include organization, location, schedule, programs, staffing, facility, child care, quality assurance, development of budgets and funding sources.

BRIEFING PAPER REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL SKILLS TRAINING CENTER

Purpose

This paper is written to present information concerning the potential demand for local technical and industrial training and to describe current support for the establishment of a technical and industrial skills training center [TSTC] in this region. It is intended to encourage a decision to pursue this project plan under the auspices of the Regional Workforce Committee.

Background

For some time, we have been hearing predictions of large numbers of skilled and semiskilled jobs that will be created in the Hermiston-Boardman area due to escalating economic development. Recently, Tom Gilleese of US Bank, president of the Hermiston Development Corporation, estimated that more than 4,000 such jobs will become available in this area during the next few years. At a more recent meeting of human resource representatives from local industry (1/30/97), a larger number of jobs was predicted. The recent industry additions and construction startups in the Hermiston area provide concrete evidence of this anticipated need. It is imperative that we do some earnest planning rather than wait until the training needs become critical.

From a more general perspective, by the year 2000, 80% of jobs will require technical skills, yet only half of American adults are so prepared. Four related elements of information about broader concerns of training the future workforce are supportive regarding this project:

- President Clinton has endorsed workforce training as one of his primary education agenda items,
- the new agenda for the Oregon Community College system includes a significant emphasis on workforce training,
- it is now predicted that a minimum of 32 percent of block grant funding will be used for adult training and retraining, and
- Senate Bill 322 that will create four technical skills training centers in the state has recently been passed out of the Senate Education Committee with a positive recommendation.
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Significance of the Need

Because of the rapid growth of industry and the influx of new companies into this area, the need for providing technical skills training in the Umatilla Morrow region is already becoming very significant. For many occupations, technical skills training in this area is either currently unavailable or not available in

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a format that specifically suits the needs of regional businesses and industries and the populations that will be trained. Programs must be available to serve the needs of young worker training (the emerging workforce), unemployed and underemployed workers (the transitional workforce), and employed workers (the current workforce).

Information Acquisition Process

In November of 1996, a concept paper on a technical and industrial skills training center for this region was prepared by the author and presented to several local organizations for comment. Mostly favorable responses were obtained during these presentations, and they generally were accompanied by requests for more detailed information. Earlier this year, the idea was brought to the Regional Workforce Committee for discussion and solicitation of support. At that meeting the committee voted unanimously to support the pursuit of a regional technical and industrial skills training center and requested that further investigative work be done before consideration of a project planning phase.

To satisfy that request, during April and May of 1997 interviews were conducted with forty individuals from various companies, social service agencies, training organizations, and private practice to learn perceptions of the need for and functions to be fulfilled by a regional technical and industrial skills training center. Written input on the concept was obtained from survey response forms returned by most of these individuals. In some cases, interviewees secured additional respondents from within their organizations. The original concept paper has been modified into this briefing paper by inclusion of many of the ideas that come back though this process.

Partnership Approach

To bring an entity such as a technical and industrial skills training center into being will require a strong community partnership. Some partners will be directly involved as training providers; others will be involved as training customers; and yet others will contribute political and funding support. In addition to the present involvement by school districts, local business and industry, state agencies, private training organizations, and advocacy groups, additional partners will be earnestly sought.

One pleasing result of the recent survey effort is the clear indication from everyone who has considered this project so far that they are clearly interested in a partnership effort. Most of the turf considerations of the past have been replaced by a genuine alignment of purpose. The Region 12 Workforce Committee embodies the core of the requisite regional partnership that will bring the center into being, and it can provide the coordination effort for future aspects of this project.

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Goals

Rather than emphasizing a physical facility, planning effort should be directed toward the establishment of a training resource that will act as a regional vendor and broker of technical skills training courses and programs. The TSTC's planned existence should be considered as a regional resource. It should be planned to provide *capability and capacity for training* at various locations and through various means. Even though a center of operations and location for some training would be necessary (probably in or near Hermiston), as much of the training as possible should be planned for existing school and college facilities, available industry sites, and community meeting places.

Planning for the technical and industrial skills training center should specifically aim at accommodation of the technical, industrial, and business training needs of local enterprises and the skill development needs of various components of the local workforce. This project would realize several goals:

- to establish a Technical and Industrial Skills Training Center as a regional resource for flexible, directly applicable employee training,
- to establish and enhance regional training partnerships with business and industry,
- to provide technical training programs that feature state of the art technology in both application and instruction,
- to offer a highly responsive, needs-based system for providing job-based training,
- to establish a source of short-term, intensive job-preparatory training for persons needing quick entry to the workforce,
- to provide a training delivery system that can readily move participants from threshold skills into family living wage employment,
- to provide articulated secondary and post secondary educational programs leading to industry certification and, later, professional certification or associate degrees,
- to offer professional technical courses that can be applied to the Certificate of Advanced Mastery Endorsement Credential,
- to expand the availability of professional technical programs offered through alternative instructional methodologies,
- to expand non-traditional career opportunities for males and females, and
- to establish related opportunities for emerging and existing apprenticeship programs.

Curriculum Models and Learning Strategies

The measure of excellence for a training organization is the success of its graduates. This success depends on their motivation and ability to apply occupationally relevant technical knowledge to solve problems and quickly learn new situations. The technical skills gained from a training experience are what

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graduates need to qualify for a job, and the thinking processes and human relations skills are those that enable them to progress successfully in their occupations. Both aspects must be done with excellence. For the technical and industrial skills training center to provide an effective program, its training strategies must be effective, modern, rigorous, engaging, and varied.

Close coordination with local industry must be used to develop the curriculum. Such a curriculum is a living entity; it must be expected to grow and change continuously. Learning/teaching/coaching methods must be taken from the most effective strategies available. Every effort must be extended to provide the best learning experience possible. Quality assurance for the training effort must be based on regular feedback from employers and graduates to assure its continuing excellence. Research on effective training methods must be a continuing responsibility for center personnel.

Since various workforce constituencies will be served by this center, separate curriculum models will be designed to fulfill their technical skills training needs. Three streams of participants are expected: 1) secondary students who wish to complete all or a large amount of their training while still enrolled in high school, 2) post-high school students and a significant number of the unemployed workforce who wish to complete their occupational training in a relatively short time, and 3) currently employed members of the workforce who wish to enhance their career opportunities. The model established for those in high school could also be used for underemployed, part-time workers.

Duration of training would depend on the participant's personal and career goals and the requirements stated by local industry for his/her chosen occupation. For the second group described above, program length could be up to six months and involve up to twenty 40-hour (one week) modules in several skill and personal development areas, or it could be as short as three weeks and include three training modules. Modules will be organized in occupationally oriented areas (as illustrated below) where each area will contain an introduction module and four additional, non sequential modules. [A 40-hour, one-week module is roughly equivalent to a two-credit community college course.] Each participant would follow a program of courses within his/her training period designed for his/her talents and to meet his/her career goals. Individualized curricula would consist of groups of modules (courses) that address specific occupational areas. The curriculum model for secondary and partially employed participants could work in a similar manner for 20 hours per week over a longer calendar period. All training modules will be offered on an as-needed basis; no attempt will be made to fit the TSTC's training schedules to existing semester, quarter, or other traditional formats.

A principal component of the local technical training center plan will be to provide elements of its instruction in a manner styled after the best aspects of successful military and private enterprise training ventures. Embedded strategies

that promote attention and motivate participants' commitment will help make the learning successful. A key element of these strategies will be an instructional methodology that emphasizes development of thinking skills to make the learning activities interesting and enjoyable, yet comfortable for the average achiever.

The programs will work to develop a strong work ethic by emulating the 40-hour work week with the 40-hour learning week for full-time students. Part-time students, those taking 20 hours per week, will encounter the same work ethic development philosophy. A dress code and a workplace attendance policy will also work to reinforce work ethic ideals in all of the center's activities. Participants will see serious and coordinated activities of program coaches and supporting staff as they display their own professional work ethic.

Primary instructional strategies would involve learning-coaching, *skillful thinking* (metacognition), computer-assisted instruction, reflective teaching, and competency-based, project-oriented classes. Admission would be based on satisfactory accomplishment of threshold skills and/or recommendations from agency and school staffs and the completion of a *discovery module*.

The discovery module would be one week (40 hours) long. It would be designed to 1) start the development of self-awareness, teamwork, and commitment skills, 2) introduce the skillful thinking approach to problem solving, 3) include an introduction to the purpose and organization of a business enterprise, and 4) advocate the idea of quality in workmanship. A major objective of the discovery module would be the development of work ethics and lifelong learning.

Recognition of achievement for participants would be an emphasized practice for the center. Regular recognition ceremonies would be held. Individual "TSTC Certificates" could be provided for each module, and/or a more classy certificate could be provided for the completion of an entire skill area or an individually designed program. Following the successful completion of a training program, participants might receive a Blue Mountain Community College certificate and/or a Certificate of Advanced Mastery Endorsement Credential. Part of the recognition plan should also include professional certification when it has been earned. A most important recognition will be done in coordination with local industry -- placement in a local job.

For career advancement the center would offer advanced courses on an as-needed, custom-developed basis to fit the training needs for employers to serve members of the current workforce. This effort would enable opportunities for career advancement or provide an avenue for those who wish to complete their associate of applied science degrees over an extended time. This activity would be provided on a cost-recovery [or profit] basis. Interest from companies outside this region for provision of advanced technical training for their employees is evident.

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Possible Program Offerings

The possibilities for technical training offerings are almost limitless and could be offered with great flexibility and would be based on an inventory of occupations for this region. The proposed philosophy of instruction and the design and logistics of the training will allow emerging topics to be addressed by the rapid development of new courses and programs. Once developed, training units will be kept for use by others. Several examples of possible skills training modules are listed below for illustration:

SKILL AREA: CAREER PROGRESSION SKILLS
- Module #1: Workplace Communication [written, oral, mathematical]
- Module #2: Human Relations on the Job
- Module #3: Oral Communication
- Module #4: Problem Solving
- Module #5: Occupational Mathematics
- Module #6: Occupational Writing

SKILL AREA: TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION
- Module #1: Blueprint Reading
- Module #2: Advanced Blueprint Reading
- Module #3: Computer Aided Drafting
- Module #4: Numerical Process Control
- Module #5: Quality Assurance Practices

SKILL AREA: ELECTRONICS CONTROL SYSTEMS
- Module #1: Basic Electricity and Electronics
- Module #2: Electronic Devices
- Module #3: Industrial Control Systems
- Module #4: Digital Electronics
- Module #5: PC Troubleshooting and Repair

SKILL AREA: FABRICATION TECHNOLOGY
- Module #1: Basic Machine Shop
- Module #2: Welding Fundamentals
- Module #3: MIG - Stainless Steel Welding
- Module #4: Materials
- Module #5: Advanced Welding Techniques [for certification]

SKILL AREA: MECHANICAL POWER SYSTEMS
- Module #1: Mechanical Components
- Module #2: Fluid Power Fundamentals
- Module #3: Mechanical Systems
- Module #4: Processing Equipment
- Module #5: Processing Equipment Control Systems

SKILL AREA: CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY
- Module #1: Woodframe Buildings
- Module #2: Steelframe Buildings

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Module #3: Construction Drafting
Module #4: Site Planning and Permit Acquisition
Module #5: Facility Planning and Construction Estimating

SKILL AREA: OFFICE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Module #1: Keyboarding
Module #2: Document Editing and Production
Module #3: Spreadsheet Applications
Module #4: Office Practices
Module #5: Desktop Publishing

SKILL AREA: HEATING AND COOLING TECHNOLOGY

Module #1: Basic Refrigeration Principles
Module #2: Basic Heating Systems Principles
Module #3: Heating, Ventilating, and Air Conditioning Fundamentals
Module #4: HVAC Control Systems
Module #5: Advanced Refrigeration

SKILL AREA: RETAIL MERCHANDISING

Modules to be developed

SKILL AREA: HOSPITALITY

Modules to be developed

SKILL AREAS AND TRAINING MODULES WILL BE DEVELOPED AS ADDITIONAL SKILL AREAS AND NEW-TO-THE-AREA OCCUPATIONS APPEAR.

Partnerships and Linkages

Within this Region 12 there are three general categories of linkages that will appear among partners and the proposed center. One of those is among training agencies that could allow seamless progression for training from basic skills through acquisition of the first career job. A second set of linkages is virtually in place with social service agencies that could provide counseling and funding assistance for participants and political support for the center. Of course, the third set is with the employers where they provide the ideas for curriculum and feedback for quality assurance and hire the graduates from the training programs. Actualization and formalization of these linkages should be part of the compact that establishes the Region 12 Technical and Industrial Training Center as a legal training entity. Some specific linkages would include:

- The Oregon Advanced Technology Center in Wilsonville [an arm of Clackamas Community College] — has offered technical support about curricula, instructional equipment on loan, and access to new technology.
- The JOBS program — has offered to structure its curriculum so that there is a natural flow from their pre-employment program into the TSTC programs.
- Adult and Family Services — is budgeting funds to help give participants the threshold skills to enter various training programs.
- Employment — has expressed significance interest in short-term training

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programs.

- Blue Mountain Community College — its participation, even as a passive partner, to provided supportive infrastructure and course documentation is an important piece of the partnership foundation for this project. Active participation on their part by providing registration capability and transcription of accomplishments would enable them to collect future income for the student FTE generated within the training programs' offerings.
- The Educational Service District — though participation in this project could not be gained without the direction of the school districts, the Regional Coordinator, Sam Pambrun, is a strong supporter of this project. His office has been enthusiastically cooperative with efforts to bring this concept into reality.
- The regional school districts — early interest in this concept was evident in the school districts. The districts' directors of professional technical education added this plan to their list of proposed accomplishments for the current school year. Early interest by the superintendents in this project can be regained by presentation of a coherent plan that includes funding sources and a preliminary budget.
- Employers — personnel from several local companies have expressed their support for this concept. Many have expressed interest in training employees and hiring graduates; others will provide moral and political support.

Expectations

This paper presents information about the need for, goals of, and proposed functions for a technical and industrial skills training center in Region 12. Support for this concept is demonstrated by the responses to a survey of potential partners and local employers. Responses to the survey were very favorable except for concerns about funding.

As a description of how the training center might work, this presentation describes various innovative teaching/learning strategies, curricula, and scheduling flexibilities. However, it does not address specific planning questions about when, where, which, how much, etc. — that is, planning questions that must be addressed before a project proposal can be made.

The next step toward the implementation of this center is a study of its economic viability. A decision to pursue this project plan with the support of the Regional Workforce Committee is earnestly sought. This decision should enable miscellaneous support for the project through the Regional Workforce Committee's Current Workforce Committee, including office supplies and office space with access to a copy machine, a telephone, and a FAX machine. It will also facilitate the sponsorship and scheduling of the meeting described below.

Planning Process

Since there seems to be sufficient interest in creating a regional technical and industrial skills training center, the planning effort should start immediately because of the time interval between planning and implementation. To begin the planning process, *an initial meeting should be held involving superintendents of school districts within a 50-mile radius, potential business/industry partners, community college administrative and instructional staff, ESD staff, and members of interested agencies*. The group would begin to examine the challenges and opportunities, specifically to look for funding channels. Funding possibilities include regional economic strategies funds (especially the rural projects aspect), a project grant from the National Science Foundation, the workforce training dollars in the anticipated block grants, direct support from industry, and exemplary projects funding through grants from other private foundations.

Some of the Questions to Address in the Project Plan

Economic potential

Several questions must be addressed to determine the economic viability of a local technical and industrial skills training center.

1. What jobs are expected to grow in number or be added to the local workforce?
2. What are the timelines for their addition and/or growth?
3. How many participants should the TSTC be designed to serve?
4. What training programs will the agencies fund?
5. What employers will pay for present and future employee training?
6. What will such a training center cost to create? To run? What can it earn?]

Organization

An early question for project planning and implementation should address the actual structure of the partnership organization for the TSTC.] Should an oversight committee be set up within the Regional Workforce Committee?

Location

The shortage of skilled persons will be focused in the Hermiston area, but an expansion effect will probably cover the whole region. Is Hermiston a good central location? What other locations are actually available? What are the parameters of their use?

Schedule

Could fall of 1998 be realized for startup of a few pilot training programs?

Programs

Would four programs, (maybe welding, electronic control systems,

construction technology, and office information management) be good startup choices?

Staffing

A team approach where all professionals have equal responsibility for program content, efficacy, and quality has been successful in similar enterprises. Would it work for the technical and industrial skills training center? How flat an organizational structure is realistic?

Several staff positions are necessary. Could some of them be part-timers at startup? Are retired occupational professionals and educators available? Will such positions as instructor/coaches, assessment specialist, center director, curriculum developer, staff development officer, class/participant coordinator, instructional support/equipment maintenance technician, and facility care technician be affordable [even findable]?

Facility

Will a 15 - 20,000-square foot facility be adequate? What adjunct sites could be used? What office/classroom arrangement is suitable? What infrastructure for modern instructional technologies is necessary? What on-site industrial equipment is really needed?

Child Care

Provision for an on-site child care center seems mandatory. How would it be incorporated? Would an arrangement with a private provider be OK?

Quality Assurance

Would a process based on an industry model for defining and measuring quality of workforce training be developed?

Development of Budgets and Funding Sources

Both capital and operating budgets must be developed. Where are the possible funding sources? How realistic are the chances for obtaining funding? How far away is funding? How long do grants take to send money?

* Threshold skills are those required to successfully learn the workplace technical skills. They include basic written and oral communication, basic mathematics, basic computer familiarity including keyboarding skills, and some human relations skills, hopefully directed to job training; in many ways they are the first comprehensive set of learning skills.